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**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DUNCAN HUNTER
CHAIRMAN, MILITARY PROCUREMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
HEARING ON THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S FOREIGN VISITOR PROGRAM**

October 6, 1998

This morning the subcommittee meets to hear testimony on the Department of Energy's Foreign Visitor Program. The department's national laboratories are hosts to thousands of foreign visitors annually. Since the end of the Cold War, the number of foreign visits to the three main nuclear weapons laboratories has been steadily growing.

The three DOE weapons labs, Lawrence Livermore, Los Alamos, and Sandia are absolute stars in the scientific world, not to mention, national treasures. Foreign visitors come to the national labs in New Mexico and California for cooperative research and the shared pursuit of solutions to technical problems. The United States benefits from this free-flow of information and the exchange of scientific thought.

However, many of the foreign visitors are from countries that are considered possible threats from national security or proliferation perspectives. Some come from countries that may have nuclear weapons aimed at us. Others come from countries that have been working to become nuclear weapons powers. The General Accounting Office has twice reviewed DOE's foreign visitor program, and twice found that foreign visitor controls were not being followed or enforced. For example, foreign visitors from sensitive countries were not being screened or approved before they arrived at the weapons labs. While the vast majority of foreign visitors from these countries visit the labs for totally innocent reasons, we know that is not always the case. Some of the foreign visitors from sensitive countries have been suspected of being foreign intelligence agents. Some foreign scientists and students have been found to be associated with institutes that support the development of nuclear weapons in their homeland. I sincerely hope that our labs did not inadvertently provide aid to India and Pakistan in their recent nuclear weapon efforts.

Our world is dangerous enough in this nuclear proliferation age, we cannot afford the risk that lax treatment of foreign visitor controls would bring to our weapons labs. We never again want to read headlines like we saw in 1990: that it was suspected that China's neutron bomb had its origins at Lawrence Livermore Laboratory.

I hope our witnesses will be able to assure us that there is intent to tighten the controls on the foreign visitor program. Testimony on additional efforts to improve security will also be welcomed.

The first objective of this hearing is to determine if the Department of Energy weapons labs are working to improve controls over the foreign visitor program, including the implementation of recommendations made by GAO.